

XXX.—Notes on the Ornithology of Spain.

By Lord LILFORD, F.L.S., F.Z.S., &c.

(Plate X.)

[Concluded from p. 187.] ✓

WE remained at Aranjuez till May 27th; but during the latter part of our stay I was unfortunately prevented by rheumatic gout from taking a very active part in collecting. Manuel, however, was indefatigable, and I was occasionally able to drive out and take some small share in his proceedings. In the neighbourhood of Las Ynfantas, a guard-station and horse-breeding establishment about four miles from Aranjuez in the direction of Toledo, we found a good many interesting birds. The country about this spot consists of low hills totally uncultivated, with here and there large flat or slightly undulating expanses, the whole covered with gum-cistus, rosemary, lavender, Spanish broom, several species of thyme, and many other low-growing shrubs, with an infinite variety of wild flowers. The railway runs parallel to the road from Aranjuez to Toledo, and separates the country just described from the marshy *Soto* on the banks of the Tagus, this *Soto* being in some parts under cultivation, and in others thickly wooded with common and white poplars, planes, oaks, willows, tamarisks, and so forth. The avenue along the road above mentioned is perhaps one of the finest in the world, and affords a congenial home to many species of birds.

On May 9th I rode out to Las Ynfantas, where Manuel was established, and found that he had shot several Rock-Sparrows (*Petronia stulta*), which were breeding about the guard-house, and in the woodwork of an old aviary now empty, but formerly tenanted by Peafowls and Pheasants. On our way I observed a beautiful Hobby (*Hypotriorchis subbuteo*), but could not get a shot at him; I shot a few Bee-eaters and a brilliantly-coloured Common Cuckoo. We were prevented by heavy showers from extending our researches to any great distance from the station; but we managed to bag a Little Bustard (*Otis tetrax*), four Spotted Cuckoos, several couples of Quails, two good specimens of the Sardinian Starling (*Sturnus unicolor*), and the only

common Nightjar (*Caprimulgus europæus*) which came under my notice in Spain. We here saw the first Rollers of the season, but did not on this occasion succeed in adding one of these birds to our collection. On the following day, however, in the *Soto*, at this same locality, we shot seven beautiful examples of this species, and also obtained four of the Red-necked Nightjar (*Caprimulgus ruficollis*), and the same number of the Lesser Kestrel. We also met with the Garden Warbler (*Sylvia hortensis*) in great abundance, besides many other species already mentioned, and took a nest with two eggs of the Black Kite.

During the next few days Manuel was obliged to be at Madrid, and I was too lame to do much; but I rode about the country, and, with the assistance of Agapo, procured several eggs of some interest, amongst others those of the Red-necked Nightjar and Little Ringed Plover (*Ægialitis minor*). The mode of breeding of the first named exactly resembles that of its congener; the eggs, two in number, are laid on the bare ground, without any semblance of a nest. The nests of the Little Plover were always close to a road or mule-track, and far from any water; the number of eggs is, as might be expected, always four. On May 13th we went by a circuitous route over the Llanos de la Cabina round to Las Ynfantas, and on our way met with the Southern Grey Shrike (*Lanius meridionalis*), which I had not previously seen in Castile. It is by no means common in this locality. We also here found the Black-headed Warbler (*Sylvia melanocephala*), which, though very abundant in the south of Spain, is apparently rare in these parts. It is a remarkable fact that *Cyanopica cooki* should be quite unknown in the neighbourhood of Aranjuez. I could not discover that any of the keepers or woodmen were acquainted with it, although it is so plentiful about Madrid, at a distance of about twenty miles,—the only reason that I can imagine to account for its absence being the want of the evergreen oak, to which it certainly exhibits a very remarkable partiality. Manuel returned from Madrid, bringing several eggs of this Magpie from the Casa de Campo, and on this occasion put me up to the art of securing some Little Bustards, which consists at this season in

lying in wait—near a patch of a certain plant with a white flower, which is very common in these plains, but the name of which I do not remember—until one hears a faint clicking note unlike that of any other bird with which I am acquainted, and impossible to describe accurately: this, it appears, is the love-call of the male; and on hearing it Manuel used to signal to me to advance upon the spot whence it came, he keeping in line with me at about a gunshot off. The male bird always rose first, with a great clatter of wings and a sort of crowing chuckle, generally a long shot off, whilst the hen lay close till nearly trodden upon, or sprung by the dogs.

These birds were now pairing, but had not yet begun to lay; I found that, unless the clicking note had commenced, it was merely vexation of spirit to try to get a shot on foot, although on horseback or on wheels one may approach the birds very closely. We found both species of Sand-Grouse (*Pterocles arenarius* and *P. alchata*) in considerable numbers; but it is only by chance that a shot at them is to be got by fair means. I did manage on this occasion to bag a beautiful specimen of the latter species out of a large flock which rose at a long distance. The recognized way of shooting Sand-Grouse in Spain is by waiting at their drinking-places in the early morning and evening during the great heats of summer. Both the above-named species are common in many parts of the Castiles, La Mancha, Murcia, Andalucia, Estremadura, and again in some districts of Aragon and Catalonia. The black-breasted species (*P. arenarius*) is known in Spain as "*Ortega*" or "*Churra*;" whilst *P. alchata* is universally called "*Ganga*." They delight in the barest and most stony localities they can find, and even in hungry Spain are considered "*muy mala carne*." Both species of Bustard are, on the contrary, in my opinion, excellent eating, the *Otis tetrax* taking the place and name of "*Faisan*" at the *tables d'hôte* in Spanish hotels, as the Black Grouse does at those of Northern Italy. The Stone-Curlew (*Ædicnemus crepitans*) is very common in this district, and we shot several of them.

A pair of Golden Eagles soared over our heads as we sat at luncheon; and Booted Eagles (*Aquila pennata*) were continually in sight, beating the country harrier-fashion for rabbits and

partridges, which are extremely abundant here. We found the Spotted Cuckoos in the open plain far away from anything worthy the name of tree. The pretty little Spectacled Warblers (*Sylvia conspicillata*) enlivened the solitudes with their lively actions and hurried notes, whilst the four common Spanish Larks kept rising at almost every step. The specimens of *Galerita cristata* which I obtained in Spain are decidedly smaller and more rufous in colouring than the average from other parts of Southern Europe*; and I fancy that Spanish examples of *Melanocorypha calandra* are less distinctly marked than those of Italy; but I have not had opportunities of comparing these last-named birds. Wherever there are trees in this neighbourhood, there are to be found numbers of *Lanius rutilus*, which is the common Shrike of Spain; *Lanius meridionalis* and *Lanius minor* are not uncommon in Andalucia, and *Lanius excubitor* is found occasionally in the north. I have reason to believe that the North African *Telephonus tchagra* occurs in certain places in the extreme south-west of Spain; but it is certainly not common in any part of the country, and is probably very locally distributed.

From May 15th till the 24th I was quite laid up and unable to leave the house; but Manuel kept M. Michel well employed, bringing in one evening two very fine adult specimens of *Vultur monachus*, which he killed as they were regaling upon the remains of the fox he had shot amongst the rocks of Sotomayor ✓ on April 29th, as before mentioned (p. 184). He also brought in several Egyptian Vultures (*Neophron percnopterus*) killed from their nests in the range of cliffs at the spot just mentioned; and Agapo managed with considerable difficulty to procure three eggs of this last-named species, all incubated. The stench from one nest was, he told me, so abominable that even he, hardened as he was by the perpetual consumption of garlic and bad tobacco, could hardly make up his mind to swing himself into the cleft in which it was situated: the cause of this overpowering perfume was an accumulation of putrefying snakes, which both Manuel and Agapo seemed to consider an unusual occurrence. In the other nests nothing more offensive than bones of

* [This would appear to be *G. theclæ*, L. Brehm, 'Naumannia,' 1858, pp. 210-213.—ED.]

goats, lambs, and the like was to be found. From Las Ynfantas Manuel brought in an Eagle which I took to be a specimen of *Aquila navioides*; but Mr. J. H. Gurney, to whose decision in such matters I most respectfully bow, pronounces it to be an Imperial Eagle (*A. heliaca*). This specimen is in a very bleached and singular-looking state of plumage, and in colouring very much resembles the ordinary plumage of *A. navioides*. Manuel pronounced it to be a very old bird which had long ceased to breed and was leading a solitary life on the wilds of Las Ynfantas.

On May 21st some boys brought in two young Spotted Cuckoos, which fed greedily on chopped beef and hard-boiled eggs, flies, beetles, grasshoppers, and so forth. Agapo brought in three more a few days afterwards; and I succeeded in bringing three of these birds safely to England, and kept them in good health till about the middle of last March, when they all died in one week, though apparently quite strong and well, and certainly very voracious to the last. They are sulky and quarrelsome birds, only interesting from their peculiarities and rarity as cage-birds in this country. We obtained a good many more specimens of birds previously mentioned, and a considerable number of eggs; and on May 26th Manuel knocked down a magnificent male Bustard (*Otis tarda*) which rose at a few paces from the carriage in which we were. We marked him down, and Manuel after a clever stalk got within shot, and gave him the contents of both barrels as he rose. He did not appear to be seriously hurt, and attempted to cross the valley of the Tagus; but a violent squall of wind forced him back towards us, and he fell headlong into a field of standing wheat, in which Manuel, Agapo, and his dog sought him in vain for upwards of an hour. This was the only Great Bustard which we met with near Aranjuez; but the species is common in suitable localities throughout Spain, and several eggs were subsequently brought to me from the environs of Madrid. I was assured in Andalucia that a considerable number of Great Bustards remain in the plains about Seville during the whole year, but that they receive great reinforcements in February and the beginning of March, and that the birds which arrive from the

south at that season are always the largest, and are distinguished by the *cazadores* as "*Moriscos*." In April 1864 I found the Great Bustard in great numbers in the immediate neighbourhood of Seville; and a brother 'Ibis' can bear witness to our vain efforts to procure a specimen, and to the fact that a fine male was brought to our hotel which weighed 32 lbs. English. The Great Bustard is termed in Spanish "*Abutarda*," as has been often said; the Little Bustard is known as "*Sisson*," while the Stone-Curlew is "*Alcaravan*."

We quitted Aranjuez on May 27th, leaving Manuel and M. Michel to collect and skin birds for some days, as it was my intention to remain a short time in Madrid before going to San Ildefonso, and Manuel had insisted that it would be unwise to leave Aranjuez for good without having visited Villamejor, on the road between that place and Toledo, where he expected a rich harvest of raptorial birds, and where he assured me that the Imperial and Booted Eagles bred in considerable numbers. During the few days that we remained at Madrid I paid several more visits to the Casa de Campo, and found the Blue Magpies busily employed in their domestic duties. The nests are placed indiscriminately high and low, often within reach from the ground, and sometimes at the top of a lofty poplar, though I think the olive, the ilex, and the acacia are perhaps the most favoured trees. The nest varies a good deal in material and form, but is for the most part constructed of green moss and hairs on the inside, with a strong outwork of twigs and lichens, in some instances being very hard to distinguish amongst the moss-covered branches of the ilex and wild olives. The average complement of eggs, I should say, is six, though I have several times met with seven, and once or twice found five hard set upon. As among the large number of eggs of this species which I have obtained there are a good many varieties, I take this opportunity of presenting the readers of 'The Ibis' with representations of a series sufficient to show what the most extreme of them are like (Plate X. figs. 3-8). The birds are very bold and noisy when they have young, but before they have hatched generally slip quietly away, and remain concealed, occasionally uttering a low chiding note. In most cases, where one

nest is found there will be four or five in its close vicinity. I obtained several young birds, and regret very much that I found it impossible to rear them. After a protracted and diligent search, and a good deal of cutting and hewing with a clasp-knife, guided by the chiding of the parent-birds, I succeeded in finding a nest of Cetti's Warblers (*Potamodius cettii*) in a densely-matted briar on the bank of a small stream which runs through these grounds. The young birds appeared to have only just left the nest, and were hopping and chattering in the briars close to it. The nest was built of dead leaves and a few fine grasses, and was placed close to the ground. I several times lifted my gun to shoot at the old birds, but refrained from firing as they were too near me; and most fortunate was it that I was thus prevented, as, on emerging from the thick covert, I found that, had I fired in the direction of the birds, I must almost inevitably have killed a very pretty female specimen of the human species who was engaged in washing clothes within a few yards of me, but whom I had neither seen nor heard till I came out of the thicket. On informing her of her escape, and expressing my satisfaction, she only laughed, and said, with true Spanish coolness, "*Ah, Caballero mio!* I should have gone to heaven, and they would have done nothing to you, as it was an accident."

I found that Severini, the naturalist of the Carretera de San Geronimo, had been on a shooting expedition in the Sierra Morena, and had returned with two fine male specimens of the Spanish Ibex (*Capra hispanica*), one of which I purchased; he also had brought back a nest of the Long-tailed Titmouse (*Acredula caudata*), which he considered a great curiosity, never having before met with the bird or nest; nor did this species ever come under my notice in Spain. I was surprised to find in his shop a fine male Caperally (*Tetrao urogallus*); but I was informed by a gentleman from the province of Asturias that this fine game bird is by no means uncommon in some parts of northern Spain, where it is known as "*Gallo de bosque*," and also occasionally termed "*Faisan*." I have unfortunately, with the exception of a few days spent in Galicia in 1856, never visited any of the northern provinces of Spain; but, from what

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I hear, the fauna of those provinces differs very considerably from that of the central districts, and of course still more from that of the Andalucias. I am told, on good authority, of pine-clad mountains whose fastnesses are tenanted by the bear, the lynx, and the Capercally, their summits offering a home to the chamois and the Ptarmigan, whilst lower down roe-deer, Woodcocks, and our common Grey Partridge (*Perdix cinerea*) in great numbers reward the armed explorers. Whilst on the subject of Partridges, I may here state that, with the one exception mentioned below, I have never met with any Partridges in Spain but the common Red-legged species (*Caccabis rufa*). The Barbary Partridge (*C. petrosa*) I saw only on the Rock of Gibraltar, whither it was introduced from the African coast; I have heard of its former occurrence in Murcia, but am assured that it is no longer to be met with in that province. The Grey Partridge is confined to the north; and I could not hear of the Bartavelle (*Caccabis saxatilis*) in any part of the country,—my experience on this point entirely coinciding with that of Captain Cook-Widdrington ('Sketches in Spain,' p.279).

To return to my proceedings at Madrid: I went down once or twice more to the Casa de Campo, but without any great result, merely adding some very brilliant Golden Orioles to my collection, and having opportunities of watching the habits of that singular bird the Little Bittern (*Ardeola minuta*), which was breeding on the banks of the small lake in these grounds. Bee-eaters were committing great ravages amongst Manuel's bee-hives; and his *chico*, or servant lad, was busily engaged from daybreak till dark in shouting and firing to keep them away. The heat was now considerable, and had silenced most of the birds; the change in this respect between my present and former rambles in these grounds was very remarkable. In April the call-note of the Scops-Owl, the thrilling music of Cetti's Warblers, and Nightingales, the chuckle of the Red-legged Partridge, the incessant babble of the Great Sedge Warbler in the reeds, and a multitude of other bird-sounds enlivened these groves and glades; but now, with the exception of an occasional faint laugh from the Green Woodpecker, and the flute-like call of an "*Oropendola*" (the Golden Oriole), hardly a sound of

bird-life was to be heard. My friend Don Manuel Sanchez, of Calle de Alcala, brought me great numbers of the eggs of the Blue Magpie, with a few other species, and would not hear of any remuneration, as I had made him a present of an English work on ornithology, which he could not read, but the plates of which gave him extreme delight. A Spanish White, Bewick, or Yarrell still *se fait désirer*. There is no work whatever on general Spanish zoology, though a few lists of the birds and insects of some provinces, published in the Proceedings of the Royal Academy of Madrid, induce us to hope for better things; yet I much fear that any general attention to natural history in Spain will long remain a thing of *mañana*.

On June 2nd we left Madrid for San Ildefonso, better known perhaps as La Granja, from the palace which is situated in the village. Taking the northern line of railway as far as Villalba, we thence proceeded by diligence over the Guadarrama, arriving at our destination early in the afternoon. The road over the Sierra is very fine, the southern side being very stern and barren; on crossing the frontier of Old Castile, at the summit of the pass, we entered a magnificent pine-forest, through which we rapidly descended till we emerged on level ground near Valsain, a village about two miles from San Ildefonso, at the foot of the mountains, the lower slopes of which are clothed with dense oak-copse; and below them again the plains of Old Castile stretch away unbroken as far away as the eye can reach in the direction of Valladolid. San Ildefonso is beautifully situated immediately at the foot of the Sierra, surrounded by shady copses, and watered by the rapid Eresma, whilst the snowy peak of La Peñalara, eight thousand feet high, towers in the background, appearing so close in this fine air that one is led to imagine that two or three hours would bring one to it, although the ascent is in fact a good long day's hardish work. The only birds I noticed on the journey were, besides the inevitable Woodchats, Larks, and Bee-eaters, a few Blue Magpies, one or two Greater Spotted Woodpeckers (*Picus major*), and a Goshawk, which dashed across the road close to us. We found no inn open at San Ildefonso, as the Court was still absent; but we obtained comfortable lodgings in a private house,

and I at once sent off the *chicos* of the family to seek and bring in all the eggs that they could find, as our hostess informed me that one of her sons was a *demonio* for bird's-nesting and would soon enlist the flower of the youth of San Ildefonso in my behalf. The result this evening was a nest with five eggs of the Blue Magpie, and an egg of the Cinereous Vulture, which last the boys assured me they had found on the ground at a spot much frequented by this species, which breeds in the pine-forest close at hand, and is by far the most common Vulture in the Castiles. This egg is slightly smaller than those of *Gyps fulvus* in my collection, and is of a uniform clouded reddish-pink colour, very much resembling some varieties of the egg of *Aquila chrysaetus*. I have no hesitation in ascribing this egg to *Vultur monachus*, as, although I was unfortunately too late to find the eggs *in situ* myself, the fragments of egg-shells found in and below several nests of this Vulture exactly corresponded with this specimen, and I found that *Gyps fulvus*, of which species a few pairs used in former years to nest in a range of cliffs near the village, is now comparatively scarce in the district, only one individual coming under our notice during our stay at San Ildefonso, which fell to Manuel's gun, and is now in my collection. I received a letter from Manuel from Aranjuez informing me that he had been too late at Villamejor for the nests of *Aquila heliaca*, but had obtained there several eggs of the Booted Eagle with the parent birds, besides many other species. M. Michel and he arrived at San Ildefonso on June 5th. In the meantime the boys had brought me many eggs of different species, amongst them those of the Common Sparrow-Hawk (*Accipiter nisus*), which is abundant here, though I never met with it at Aranjuez, Red-necked Nightjar, Blue Magpie, Spectacled Warbler, Missel Thrush, Blackbird, Common Swift, and Grey and Yellow Wagtails (*Motacilla sulphurea* and *Budytes flava*). We drove to Segovia, six miles off, seeing on our way a good number of White Storks (*Ciconia alba*), Common and Black Kites, Woodchats, and Russet Wheatears (*Saxicola stapa-zina*), but not a single Bee-eater, Spotted Cuckoo, or Common Magpie, which birds, so abundant about Madrid and Aranjuez, appear to be very scarce on this northern side of the Gua-

darrama. “*Rabilargo*” also, the Spanish Magpie, was rather conspicuous by his scarcity ; and I discovered that all the eggs of this species brought to me by the lads came from an enclosed shrubbery of a few acres in extent, immediately adjoining the village.

As I was still unable to walk, I could of course do but very little in the way of collecting, and was forced to confine myself to the use of my eyes instead of my breech-loader, thus missing on June 5th a chance of obtaining perhaps the rarest bird which I met with during this visit to Spain. We were returning from a drive in the pine-forest, from which we had just emerged on the road near Valsain, when my attention was attracted by our *chico* (who was on the box) exclaiming, “¿Que pajaro es aquel?” and on looking up I saw a beautiful specimen of La Marmora’s Falcon (*Hypotriorchis eleonoraë*) passing us slowly at not more than ten yards’ distance. This individual was in the plumage which so nearly resembles that of the Hobby and is, I believe, that of the second year. We halted, and I had the pleasure, not unmixed with vexation, of observing for several minutes the evolutions of three of this rare species without being able to secure a specimen. All three were busily engaged in catching insects, over a marshy open spot close to the road, seizing them in their talons, and shifting them into their mouths with great ease and rapidity ; they appeared totally regardless of our presence, and all repeatedly passed within a few yards of the carriage. One of these Falcons was of a uniform sooty-brown ; the third was apparently in the same stage of plumage as the first we noticed, but not nearly so brightly or distinctly marked. The extreme length of wing in this Falcon immediately arrests the attention of any one accustomed to Hawks. This peculiarity is even more striking in La Marmora’s Falcon than in the Common Hobby ; and the difference in size between the two species is much more remarkable on the wing than I should have imagined. On informing Manuel of what we had seen, he told me that he had often observed small Hawks near the Escorial engaged in catching insects, but never any of the *H. eleonoraë*. We revisited the spot where we saw these Falcons several evenings in vain ; we never saw them again.

I was shown a Crossbill (*Loxia curvirostra*) alive in a cage in the village,—the story about this species here being that Carlos III. kept a great many of these birds in an aviary at Rio Frio, a shooting-lodge at a few miles' distance, of which several pairs escaped and established themselves in the *pinar*, where they are now common. The possessor of the Crossbill accurately described to me a Bullfinch (*Pyrrhula vulgaris*) which I never met with in Spain, but which he assured me was not very uncommon about San Ildefonso during the winter. On June 6th Manuel and Agapo went for a long day up into the forest, and returned with a fine female Goshawk, shot from the nest, which contained three young birds just hatched. He also brought in a good specimen of *Picus major*, which is the Common Woodpecker of this district, and two specimens of *Parus ater*, which species I had not hitherto observed in Spain. They had also met with two nests of *Vultur monachus*, each containing a young bird, and a nest of *Aquila pennata*, which they did not examine, as Manuel could not manage to kill the parent bird. The next day I was able to get about a little on foot; and whilst Manuel and Agapo again went up into the forest, I wandered about near the village and obtained specimens of the Ortolan (*Emberiza hortulana*), which is very abundant on the hill-sides here, where I also met with the Stonechat (*Pratincola rubicola*), which appears to be very locally distributed in Spain, as, although common in many parts of Andalucia, I never met with it in New Castile. I found nests of the Woodchat and Woodlark, but sought in vain for that of the Little Owl (*Athene noctua*), which we were assured existed in a ruined chapel near the village. Manuel came in at night with a very fine specimen of the Cinereous Vulture, which he had winged with a bullet as she left her nest, an egg of the Booted Eagle from the nest which they found yesterday, and a nest with five eggs of our Common Redbreast (*Erythacus rubecula*), which, although common throughout Spain in winter, breeds only in the mountains, as I found was also the case in Northern Italy. The boys brought in two beautiful nests of *Ficedula hypoleis*, each containing five eggs, as well as eggs of *Sylvia cinerea* and *Sylvia atricapilla*. The next day, having procured ponies, we all went up into the forest together,

and made for the Vulture's nest, from which Manuel had killed the female. This nest was situated at the top of one of the tallest pines, and was visible from some distance, with the male bird seated close to it. He allowed us to approach almost to the foot of the tree, and sailed off apparently unhurt by a volley of our four barrels. Agapo was soon up to the nest, in which was a young bird of about the size of a Dorking-cock, which made strong demonstrations of hostility on finding himself for the first time in close proximity to the human form divine. Agapo, however, soon overcame his scruples, and lowered him tethered by the legs to the ground, where we received him with every attention. A more unsightly specimen of the great class *Aves* I never before beheld: he was covered with brownish-grey down, with a bright pink cere and very pale yellow legs and feet; part of the trachea of a sheep or goat, perfectly hard and dry, completely encircled one leg; and altogether his appearance presented a combination of the absurd and repulsive almost impossible to describe. The nest was composed of large boughs externally, and was lined with twigs and a few fragments of wool. In the foundation of the nest, which was unusually deep for that of a raptor, a pair of Tree-Creepers (*Certhia familiaris*) had established their abode, and were rearing a family of five or six young. This species appears to be common in all the wooded parts of the country. The Nuthatch (*Sitta cæsia*) is also common in this forest, and I shot two good specimens close to the Vulture's nest.

A little further on in the forest we found a large nest, on the lower branch of a pine. Manuel crept cautiously up towards it, and shot a fine female Booted Eagle as she dashed off. He then made a *cache* with pine-boughs within shot of the nest, and in about half an hour another shot proclaimed to us that the male bird also had fallen. The nest contained two eggs; this appears to be the invariable number laid by this Eagle, which is one of the most common of the raptorial family in this district, arriving about the end of April, and remaining in the country till October. One of these eggs is represented on the accompanying plate (Plate X. fig. 1). The other and more highly-coloured specimen, drawn on the same plate (fig. 2), was

taken from a nest at Aranjuez on May 7th. The nests, of which we found several, were generally placed on the lowest branches of a tall pine, at their junction with the main trunk, and were built of sticks, but inside invariably contained fresh twigs with the green leaves adhering to them. This Eagle has a shrill, piercing scream, different from that of any other rap-torial bird with which I am acquainted.

We shot a Common Kite (*Milvus ictinus*) from the nest, which contained two half-fledged young, and also found a nest of the Common Buzzard, in which was a young bird not long hatched, and a large lizard, both of which were devoured by our young Vulture after a little pressing. I may here mention that I reared and brought home this Vulture, which soon became very tame, and that very evening devoured the greater part of the body of his maternal parent, which M. Michel had skinned in an incredibly short space of time. This young Vulture has now grown into an enormous bird; he is alive and well, and, though not so amiable in temper as he was during his infancy, appears to live amicably with a fine old Golden Eagle in my aviary here, recalling to my mind many *cosas de España*, and making me long to be once more amongst the pines of San Ildefonso, with the untiring Manuel and trusty Agapo.

The commonest birds in this forest are Woodpigeons (*Columba palumbus*), Great Spotted Woodpeckers, Chaffinches, Nut-hatches, and Coal-Titmice, besides the various birds of prey before mentioned. I on this day saw a Dipper (*Cinclus aquaticus*) for the first time in Spain; this bird is common on the Eresma and the other mountain-streams of this district. A pair of Red-starts were nesting in the roof of the church of San Ildefonso, which were, I presume, of the race or variety known as the Grey Redstart (*Ruticilla cairii*), as both male and female were in a state of plumage very closely resembling that of the females of *R. tithys*. I could not shoot them, as they always haunted the church in the middle of the village; but I had numerous opportunities of observing them closely, as the window of my room commanded a full and near view of their favourite habitat. The song of the male bird resembles that of the Common Red-

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note

start (*R. phœnicura*) more than that of *R. tithys*; and he was very noisy about daybreak and sunset. These were the only birds of this race that I met with, though *R. tithys* was very abundant amongst the rocks at some distance from the village.

We remained at San Ildefonso till June 15th, making a few more expeditions up into the Sierra, where we found several more nests of *Vultur monachus* (each containing a single young bird), some more nests of *Aquila pennata* with eggs, and obtained on one occasion a fine specimen of *Gyps fulvus*, as before mentioned. I was surprised to find the common Hedge-Sparrow (*Accentor modularis*) in great abundance high up on the mountains, haunting and breeding amongst the scrub which crops up amongst the detritus and scattered boulders below the crags, in just the sort of locality I should have expected to find *A. alpinus*, with which species, however, I did not here meet. The Rock-Thrush (*Petrocincla saxatilis*), the Rock-Swallows (*Hirundo rupestris*), and the Wall-Creeper (*Tichodroma muraria*) were common amongst the peaks of the Sierra, and I on several occasions noticed the Alpine Swift (*Cypselus melba*). We often saw a pair of Lämmergeyers (*Gypaetus barbatus*), but never could manage to secure a specimen. A woodcutter met us one day in the forest swinging a young Golden Eagle in one hand, whilst the other grasped an egg from the same nest. He had just taken them, and took us to the spot; the nest was built in the top of a low pine, at not more than twelve or fourteen feet from the ground, in a craggy and thickly-grown part of the forest, at about a mile from the village. Manuel was at the place before daybreak the next morning, and came in a few hours after with the female bird, which he had shot as she came sailing to the nest with a Partridge in her talons. The boys brought in several eggs of *Budytes flava*, and one nest with eggs and bird of *Motacilla sulphurea*, as well as some eggs of *Cyanopica cooki*, *Scops giu*, *Ruticilla tithys*, and others of no particular interest.

Here ended my ornithological researches in Spain. I regret that, not having yet visited the country during the winter months, I am unable to give any very precise information, from personal observation, as to the waders and swimming-birds of

the Peninsula ; but I propose, on some future occasion, to publish in this Magazine a complete list of the species that have come under my notice, either in a wild state or in collections, with their scientific and local Spanish names, and the localities in which I met with them.

Lilford, August 1866.

see 1869 p 170

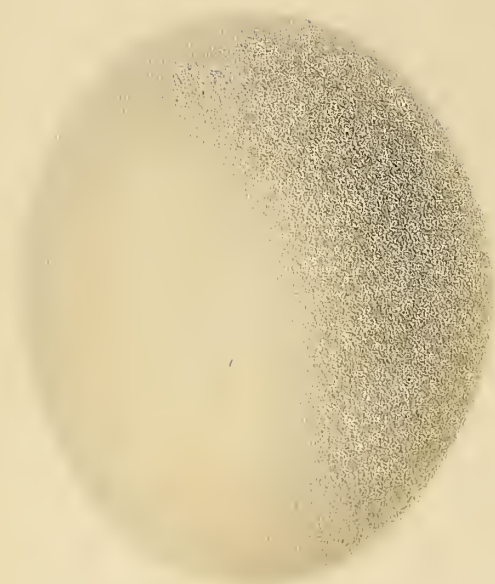
XXXI.—*Ornithological Notes from Formosa*. By ROBERT SWINHOE, Her Majesty's Consul at Taiwan, F.Z.S., &c.

(Plate XI.)

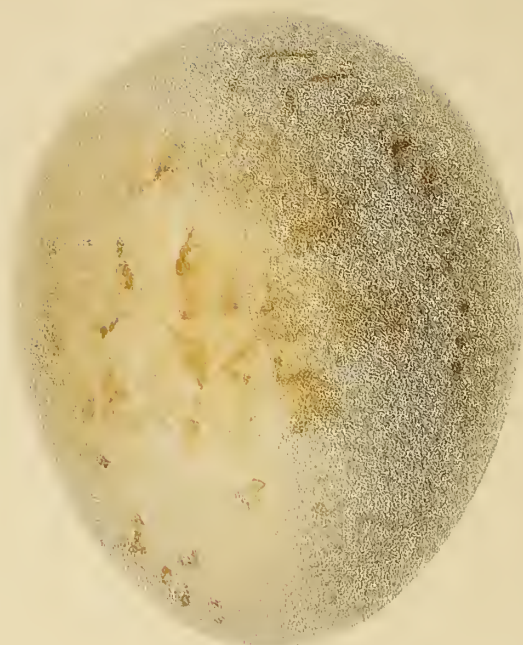
[Continued from p. 316.] ✓

I RETURNED from the mountains, having penetrated to about the centre of the island. I was there arranging to climb across to Black Rock Bay, on the east side, when a letter reached me, and caused me to hurry back with all speed to Takow. It brought me instructions to repair by first vessel to Amoy to take charge of the consulate there. I was altogether ten days in the interior ; but as I am now hurried I must defer my sketch of the trip for a future paper. I bid a long farewell to Formosa in a few days. I will, however, attempt, before I leave, to finish my descriptions of novelties and the like. I commence with

✓ *Myiomela montium*, nobis (Ibis, 1864, p. 362), ♀. Wing 3·5 inches. Bill blackish-brown. Legs brown, claws paler. Plumage olivaceous, tinged in parts with buff ; throat paler, with roots of feathers whitish. A concealed white spot on side of the neck. Abdomen more or less grey, its middle pure white. Axillaries olive-buff. Under margins of remiges light reddish-buff, making the under part of closed wing reddish on its inner half. Quills edged exteriorly with reddish olive-brown. Rectrices olive-brown ; the second to the fifth (the outermost being counted as first) having white on the outer web, the third only a little close to its root, the second more, and the third and fourth for more than half their lengths ; the neighbourhood of the white strongly shaded with black, as are all the rectrices near their roots. Outer tail-feathers in one specimen entirely black, showing, I presume, either that the particular specimen is a young male in moult, or



1



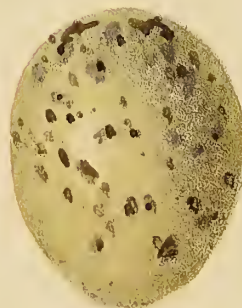
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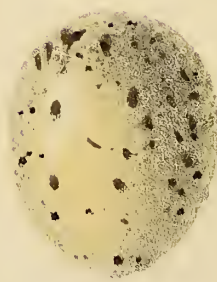
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5



6



7



8

J. Smit, del.

M & N. Hanhart imp

Eggs of *AQUILA PENNATA*, 1. 2;
CYANOPICA COOKI, 3-8.